

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 **Claim 1 (currently amended):** An image forming apparatus

2 comprising:

3 a photoconductor in which a first gear portion is
4 formed on the axis of rotation and on which an electrostatic
5 latent image corresponding to a toner image is formed by a
6 rotation in a circumferential direction;

7 a developing unit which is set correspondingly to said
8 photoconductor, and makes visible said electrostatic latent
9 image formed on said photoconductor thereby to form a toner
10 image; and

11 a photoconductor drive shaft having a second gear
12 portion engaging with said first gear portion and formed on
13 an axis of rotation, which gears with said photoconductor on
14 the same axis and rotation-drives this photoconductor,

15 wherein in at least either of said first gear portion
16 and said second gear portion, an axial length of a part of
17 teeth constituting the gear portion is different from axial
18 lengths of other teeth,

19 wherein when the first gear portion and the second gear
20 portion are in a same phase, only a leading end of said part
21 of teeth that is longer than the other teeth from said first
22 or second gear portion comes into contact with a leading end

23 of a part of teeth from the remaining first or second gear
24 portion.

Claim 2 (canceled)

1 **Claim 3 (currently amended):** An image forming
2 apparatus ~~according to claim 2~~ comprising:
3 a body of the image forming apparatus;
4 an image forming unit which includes a photoconductor
5 drum, a charge roller that charges said photoconductor drum,
6 and a developing roller that makes an electrostatic latent
7 image formed on said photoconductor drum visible by toner,
8 and which is attached to the body; and
9 a photoconductor drive shaft which is provided for the
10 body, and transmits drive power to said photoconductor drum
11 via splines,
12 wherein at least one spline of first splines formed
13 axially on said photoconductor drum and second splines
14 formed axially on said photoconductor drive shaft is longer
15 axially than the other splines formed on the same axis
16 wherein at least one of said first splines is longer
17 than other first splines, and at least one of said second
18 splines is longer than other second splines.

1 **Claim 4 (currently amended):** The image forming
2 apparatus according to Claim [[2 or]] 3, wherein tapers are

3 provided for a leading end portion of said first spline and
4 a leading end portion of said second spline in order to
5 smooth fitting between said photoconductor drum and said
6 photoconductor drive shaft when said image forming unit is
7 attached to said image forming apparatus body.

1 **Claim 5 (original):** The image forming apparatus
2 according to Claim 4, wherein said tapers are formed in the
3 axial directions and in the rotational directions of said
4 photoconductor drum and said photoconductor drive shaft.

1 **Claim 6 (currently amended):** The image forming
2 apparatus according to ~~Claims 2 or~~ Claim 3, wherein said
3 spline coupling is provided at an end portion of said
4 photoconductor drum.

Claim 7 (canceled)

1 **Claim 8 (currently amended):** The image forming
2 apparatus ~~according to Claim 7,~~ comprising:
3 a body of the image forming apparatus;
4 an image forming unit which includes a photoconductor
5 drum, a charge roller that charges said photoconductor drum,
6 and a developing roller that makes an electrostatic latent
7 image formed on said photoconductor drum visible by toner,
8 and which is attached to the body; and

9 a photoconductor drive shaft which is provided for the
10 body, and transmits drive power to said photoconductor drum
11 via spline means for transmitting a driving force,
12 wherein said spline means includes facilitating means
13 for facilitating a connection between said photoconductor
14 drive shaft and said photoconductor drum,
15 wherein said facilitating means further includes a
16 spline on said photoconductor drum axially longer than other
17 splines and a spline on said photoconductor drive shaft
18 axially longer than other splines.

1 **Claim 9 (currently amended):** The image forming
2 apparatus according to Claim [[7 or]] 8, wherein a taper is
3 formed on an end of said facilitating means for smoothening
4 said connection between said photoconductor drive shaft and
5 said photoconductor drum.

1 **Claim 10 (original):** The image forming apparatus
2 according to Claim 9, wherein said taper is formed in the
3 axial directions and in the rotational directions of said
4 photoconductor drum and said photoconductor drive shaft.

1 **Claim 11 (currently amended):** The image forming
2 apparatus according to ~~Claims 7 or~~ Claim 8, wherein said
3 spline means is provided at an end portion of said
4 photoconductor drum.